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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the evolution of the student personnel function in higher education and particularly the uniqueness of the function of the Community College level. Some important factors which influenced the development of student personnel work in higher education are identified; the article then discusses the unique role of the community college as a segment of higher education. From the literature a symthesis of the theoretical objectives of student personnel work at the community college is presented, as well as objectives of actual programs at the community college level. These objectives are divided into three specific groups: 1) adjustive objectives which deal with necessary changes in student attitude or behavior as well as desirable environmental changes; 2) distributive objectives involving the informational processes; and 3) adaptive objectives concerned with modification in institutional programs and activities to meet variability in student and community need. (Author)

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"Objectives of Student Personnel Programs In the Community College"

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Perhaps the outstanding characteristic of this age has been uncertainty. This can be said of all periods in our history, but more now than prior to the "great depression' of the 30's. (Dressel, 1954) It is not our intent to discuss the varied influences which have led to this condition. But we must recognize that such is the case. The Students with whom we work in higher education are a vital part of this age and subject to the influences of it. Such forces as these combined with the variety of college and university purposes and the mushrooming complexities of curriculum have contributed greatly to the rise of student personnel services in higher education. This paper will direct itself to the evolution of the student personnel function in higher education and in particular to the uniqueness of the function at the community college level. The presentation is divided into three sections: (a) Student personnel development in higher education, (b) The role of the community college, and (c) Objectives of community college personnel programs.

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STUDENT PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

One of the most startling events in our American history has been the rapid rise in the number of institutions of higher education. "In 1876 there were 311 colleges and universities (Rudolph 1962); in 1969 there were 2,483 institutions identified by the Office of Education surveys. Such growth has been the result of the efforts of many groups to develop institutions which will meet their specific educational needs. This freedom to set up institutions with such a variety of purposes has resulted in a wide divergence of institutional function. Flexibility of this kind made it necessary for American universities and colleges to assume responsibilities not carried by our European counterparts. For example, the desire on the part of the early colonists for their children to learn their own particular religion and moral code led to the establishment of academies and colleges included in which were provisions for housing, boarding, and general discipline. The recognition of the need for universal compulsory education to provide a knowledgeable electorate led to an interest in students as future citizens and leaders. This interest was the beginning of student participation in the administration of our institutions. Growing public interest in higher education for purposes other than the 'classical' curriculum resulted in demands that the students be trained in skills necessary to fit them into the growing economy. An increase in the amount of vocational education meant a more complex curriculum and necessitated some provision for information and assistance in the decision making process. This helping or guiding activity was the beginning of the 'guidance' function.

Thus, we see that many of the responsibilities which the family or individual assumed in the 'old world' universities became a function of the institution in this the 'new world.' In most of the colonial colleges the students were housed and boarded. There was close supervision of their recreation, manners, morals, religion, and general welfare.

The first personnel officers in an American college were the colony overseers at Harvard. (Leonard, 1956) This responsibility soon fell to the presidents and faculties of the colonial colleges. They operated in loco parentis in supervising every aspect of the educational and total development of the student. Herein lies the basis for disciplinary action in the early academies and colleges. The boards of trustees laid down rules and acted as the court of last appeal while the administration and faculty kept the students under surveillance to detect violations. Educational guidance remained unorganized and informal during this period of the development of higher education. The faculty lived with the students and informal contact was more common. The number of students was relatively small and the curricular offerings were limited.

In the decades which followed the colonial period, this country expanded west, the industrial revolution began, and higher education became a nation-wide system. The number of institutions began to increase rabidly. With the increase in number came a parrallel increase in institutional objectives. The variety of purposes led to an increase in the kind and number of students, which in turn pointed out the need for enlargement and organization of personnel services. Housing presented a whole new set of problems. Student demands for diversified activities and the introduction of health services added to the difficulties. Increased demand for free-

som by students and their desire to have a voice in their own governance contributed additional concern. It was the growth and complexity of such non-academic problems which eventually resulted in the organization and delegation into a separate administrative unit of the personnel services.

> "Thus, all the personnel services started in the colonial colleges and carried forward through two hundred and fifty years of struggle and experimentation were loosely organized into separate administrative units. These, in turn, became the bases for the present-day unified comprehensive programs of personnel administration in the colleges and universities of the United States." (Leonard, 1956)

THE ROLE OF THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

There are many observable trends in our American culture. Two of these indications have relevance for higher education. One is that the population increases will continue to present problems to institutions of higher learning. The second is the rising demand for education beyond high school as the result of inductrial automation and technology. These two factors combine to induce the skyrocketing of enrollments in colleges and universities. The obvious solution lies in the enlargement of our higher education structure. Such a solution demands additional tax support from society, or increased contributions from private sources. The present load on the taxpayer for such things as war debts, cold wars, support of the aged, and education (at present levels) may prevent additional burdens. At this point we would have two alternatives: (a) the refusal of the public to allow the expansion of higher education which would result in selective admissions policies, and (b) to meet the demand in the most economical manner. Our democratic philosophy of equalization of educational oppor-

tunity necessitates our choosing the second alternative. We must enlarge. If we consider the present system of four year institutions this would mean the enlargement of same, the establishment of branches, and construction of new colleges and universities. This would most certainly help the situation, particularly for the group of students who require a four year program of training. But we must recognize that the increase in student population is not made up entirely of those aspiring to the bachelor's degree. The increase in four year facilities would not satisfy all segments of the demand for educational opportunity.

There are many programs of training which require only one or two years beyond high school. Programs of this type are best provided by separate institutions where the staff and facilities are geared for and directed to, the needs of students with specific interests and goals within the limits of the two year program. Our present system of community colleges seems to be ideally suited to this function. Some 40 years ago Snyder observed that we provide for the slow learner and the academically talented in our system of elementary and secondary schools. At the post-high school level we have the trade and technical schools and the research-oriented university but at both levels the 'average' student is left to shift for himself. "Junior college is the first publicly organized attempt to meet the needs of a non-academically minded highschool graduate, ..." The expansion of the community college system would not reduce the number of graduates from the four year schools since it does not intend to serve the same purpose. Quite the contrary, through a co-operative transfer program the number could conceivably increase beyond what it might have without the initial community college contact and the effective "salvage" function performed at that institution.

The establishment of community college purposes is similar to the purposing in other agencies of society. The objectives are dependent upon the characteristics of the community and the needs of the individuals using the agency. There are two broad community college purposes dictated by the combined needs of society and the high school graduate. One is to prepare the individuals for effective social living as a person, a citizen, and a family member. The second is to prepare the youth for a vocation which will allow them to make optimum personal gain and contribution to society. A community-centered college can add to these the provision for part-time adult education and community service. The community college can contribute to the cultural level of a local community through its fine arts program and other special events. A study committee has identified four major purposes of the community college: (a) preparation for advanced study, (b) vocational education, (c) general education, and (d) community service. (Henry, 1956). The internal function of the community college can be traced to the demands of two types of students or more properly, students with ultimate goals of two types. The so-called 'terminal' student is the individual who will terminate his formal education or training when he leaves the college. Within this group there are two separate classes: (a) the vocational student being trained for immediate employment, and (b) the student who plans to transfer to an upper division college or university but does not. This second body of students, because of their limited vocational exposure in preparation for degree and university requirements, presents a special and persistent guidance problem. The community college is also called upon to serve the second type of student, the 'transfer'. Historically, the transfer function was the first recognized purpose of the two-year college.

We can see then that the community college, by design and purpose, is in the position to perform some unique functions in American higher education. Two such functions would be:

(a) To provide low-cost, post-high school education in close proximity to the student's home.

(b) To provide guidance and counseling to assist in the complex decision making process

The community college faculty would appear to be well suited to assist with the second function because they are not distracted by research or productive scholarship. This function has become important enough to be listed as one of the purposes of the community college by almost every two-year institutution in the country. In a survey of junior colleges, Crawford and Reitan (1960) report these purposes: (a) Preparation of transfer students, (b) General education, (c) Vocational and technical tranining, (d) Guidance and counseling service, and (e) Community service.

OBJECTIVES OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE PERSONNEL PROGRAMS

The earlier sections of this paper were, included to illustrate that the objectives of community college personnel work are subject to the same formative influences characteristic of the general personnel movement in higher education, yet unique in their own right because of the peculiar role of the two-year institution in society. As Medsker (1960) indicated in his report on the American junior college,

> "No unit of American higher education is expected to serve such a diversity of purposes, to provide such a variety of educational instruments, or to distribute students among so many types of educational programs as the junior college."

In preparation for the presentation of this section a review of selected literature was conducted. The purpose of this review was to determine the published objectives of community college personnel work as seen by writers in the field and objectives of actual operating programs. An examination of these lists disclosed a measure of consistancy which led to the following synthesis of objectives. The organization of this consensus is patterned after McDaniel's (1956) trivium of guidance functions. The community college student personnel program objectives have been divided into those which are adjustive, distributive, and adaptive in nature. The adjustive objectives are those which deal with necessary changes in student attitude or behavior as well as desirable environmental changes. The distributive objectives involve the informational processes. They are concerned with the gathering of information about an individual for his own use and that of the school in addition to providing information to both the individual and the school from other sources. The adaptive objectives concern themselves with modification in institutional programs and activities to meet variability in student and community need.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

A. Adjustive

1. Assist the student to adjust himself to the conditions of work in the new institution.
2. Assist him in the adjustment of personal and social relationships necessitated by entrance into college life.
3. Help him budget his time and financial resources.
4. Help those who have given no consideration to their future work to choose a profession, or semi-profession best suited to their needs and capacities.
5. Guide students continuously in their progress toward the goals set forth in their educational programs.
6. Assist him to develop his capacity to make his own decisions and to solve his problems independently.

B. Distributive

1. Provide him with all possible information about his own abilities, interests, and aptitudes.
2. Assist him to get a clear idea of the various curricular offerings and the purpose of each.
3. Help him in studying occupational opportunities, qualifications, and requirements.
4. Assist students who have chosen their life's work to plan for a long-term educational program.
5. Develop and maintain an adequate system of cumulative records of assistance in interpreting individual needs.
6. Provide a program of orientation for in-coming students.

C. Adaptive

1. To correlate the work of the personnel department with all other department and functioning agencies of the institution
2. Provide assistance in curriculum-building.
3. Provide assistance in the improvement of the instructional processes.
4. Provide informational assistance as the basis for sound administrative policy formation.
5. Perform continuous evaluation of the personnel program and its relation to institutional purposes.

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